

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application:

1-16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) A semiconductor device fabrication method comprising:

forming a first insulating film by chemical vapor deposition, on a surface of a semiconductor substrate having a trench in a surface portion, thereby covering inner walls of the trench with the first insulating film;

selectively forming a second insulating film by spin coating, on the first insulating film in the trench;

etching back the second insulating film by wet etching to leave a first portion of the second insulating film over a bottom of the trench and to remove a remaining portion of the second insulating film; and

selectively forming a third insulating film by chemical vapor deposition, on the first and second insulating films in the trench.

18. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 17, further comprising:

annealing the semiconductor substrate in a water-containing ambient at a temperature of 200°C to 600°C for a predetermined time, after the second insulating film is formed; and

holding the semiconductor substrate at a temperature of 450°C to 1,000°C for a predetermined time.

19-20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 17, wherein, when the second insulating film is etched back by the wet etching, the etching rate of the first insulating film is lower than that of the second insulating film, thereby allowing a portion of the first insulating film to remain over the bottom of the trench.

22. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 21, wherein, after the second insulating film is etched back by the wet etching, forming tops of the first and second insulating films into a forward tapered shape.

23. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 17, wherein, after the second insulating film is formed and before the second insulating film is etched back by the wet etching, annealing in an oxidizing ambient such that at least a portion of the second insulating film is not converted into an SiO₂ film.

24. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein the oxidizing ambient is an oxygen ambient or a steam ambient.

25. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 17, wherein etching back the second insulating film comprises etching back the second insulating film such that a height of the second insulating film is lower than a top surface of the semiconductor substrate.

26. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 17, wherein etching back the second insulating film comprises etching back the first insulating film to bury the first and second insulating films in the trench to a height lower than a top surface of the semiconductor substrate.